(c) whether Government consider to set up help desks for attending to the problems being faced by Non-Resident Indians in Gulf countries; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF NON-RESIDENT INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) and (b) No. As regards Voting Right to NRIs, Section 19(b) of the R.P. Act 1950 provides that only a person who is ordinarily resident in a constituency shall be entitled to be registered in the electoral roll for that constituency. Accordingly, any person who is not ordinarily resident in a constituency is not entitled to be registered in the electoral roll.

There is no proposal to consider Dual Citizenship to NRIs as they are already Indian citizens.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) A 24-hour telephone help-line has been set up at the Indian Mission in Riyadh in Saudi Arabia. Proposals for setting up similar helplines in other Gulf countries are under consideration.

Gas Hydrates Programme

1730. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA: Will the Minister of OCEAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the projects identified to be taken up under the Gas Hydrates Programme by recently set up Indo-Russian Science and Technology Centre for Gas Hydrates Studies at Chennai;

(b) the areas of collaboration in which the Centre is facilitating the exchange of scientists; and

(c) the names and number of scientists exchanged between the two countries in various areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) An Indo-Russian Centre for Gas Hydrates Studies (IRCGHS) was set up on February 12, 2004 at National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), Chennai under the Integrated Long Term Programme (ILTP) for S&T cooperation with Russia.

The Centre has been set up pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Secretary, Department of Science &-Technology (DST) and Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS) in November, 2003. The Department of Science & Technology is the coordinator on the Indian side for the cooperation projects under ILTP. Following projects have been identified encompassing various aspects of Gas Hydrates estimation, characterization and other studies.

i. Geology of gas hydrates;

ii. Ecological aspects of gas hydrates processing;

iii. Economics of gas hydrates exploitation;

iv. Natural processes involving gas hydrates;

v. Estimation and modelling of gas hydrates resources;

vi. Physical, chemical, mechanical and other basic properties of gas hydrates,

vii. Development of technologies for exploration, sampling, recovery, purification and transportation of gas from gas hydrates deposits.

viii. Joint research of gas hydrates in Lake Baikal and its application to the Indian conditions;

ix. Design and development of necessary intsruments and observing devices.

(b) The projects of scientists are facilitated under all the above-mentioned areas of collaboration, which is coordinated by Indo-Russian Center for Gas Hydrates Studies.

(c) Names of the Indian/Russian scientists who visited Russia and India respectively for various Gas Hydrate related activities, as a part of this cooperation under ILTP are:

Indian Scientists	Russian Scientists
i. Dr. S. Kathiroli	i. Dr. Alexender A. Paramanov
ii. Shri Sandip Kumar Ghosh	ii. Dr. Vladmir Stoyanov
iii DR. M.S. Atmanand	iii. Dr. Sergei Sukonkin
iv Shri C.R. Deepak	iv. Academician V. Yastrevov
v. Dr. D.V.Rao	v. Dr. V. Afanasjev

Indian Scientists	Russian Scientists
	vi. Acad. F.A. Kuznetsov
	vii. Acad. Y. Gulayev
	viii. Acad. Grigoriev
	ix. Acade, K.V. Frolov
	x. Dr. V.V. Shapovalenko

Prohibition to take assignment in foreign countries during leave

1731. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state.

(a) whether Government have decided to prohibit officers working abroad to take up any assignment during leave in foreign countries;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the details of officers who took foreign assignments during leave during the last two years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI SURESH PACHOURI): (a) to (c) As per the existing policy, only short-term consultancies of less than three months duration can be undertaken by the officers by taking due and admissible leave. However, recently the Government has prohibited the officers of and above the level of Joint Secretary to the Government of India, of all services, either working at the Centre or with the State Governments from undertaking any consultancy assignments.

Long-term assignments exceeding 90 days can be undertaken with prior approval of the Government on foreign service terms, *i.e.* on payment of pension and leave salary contribution. During the last two years, no officer has been permitted to take up any long-term assignment by taking leave.

Discrimination against PCS officers for inclusion into IAS cadre

1732. SHRI P K. MAHESHWARI:
SHRI THANGA TAMIL SELVAN:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether after induction into IAS, Government discriminates against PCS direct recruits of Punjab and Haryana Civil Service by not